



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 28, 2007

H.R. 886 **Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on March 7, 2007

SUMMARY

H.R. 886 would designate the Wild Sky Wilderness on 106,000 acres of federal lands within the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in Washington and would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire nonfederal lands and interests within the proposed wilderness. The bill would require the Secretary to prepare a plan to establish hiking trails within the proposed wilderness and report to the Congress on the implementation of that plan. Finally, H.R. 886 would direct the Secretary to convey to a local public utility district a permanent easement to operate a snow-monitoring device on 1.82 acres of national forest land in exchange for roughly 372 acres of land owned by that district.

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 886 would cost \$19 million over the 2008-2012 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Enacting this legislation could affect offsetting receipts and direct spending, but we estimate that any such effects would be negligible. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.

H.R. 886 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 886 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars				
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Estimated Authorization Level	7	5	5	1	1
Estimated Outlays	7	5	5	1	1

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 886 would cost \$19 million over the 2008-2012 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. We estimate that any forgone offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending) from enacting this legislation would be negligible. Furthermore, any such changes would be offset by lowered direct spending. For this estimate, CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted before the start of fiscal year 2008 and that the amounts estimated to be necessary will be appropriated near the start of each fiscal year. Estimates of outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar activities.

Spending Subject to Appropriation

Based on information provided by the Forest Service, CBO estimates that designating the proposed wilderness would increase the agency's administrative costs by roughly \$250,000 to \$500,000 a year. We also estimate that the agency would spend \$6 million over the 2008-2010 period to remove roads that currently exist within the proposed wilderness; \$4 million over the 2008-2010 period to design and implement a system of trails; and up to \$7 million over the same period to acquire nonfederal lands and interests within the proposed wilderness.

Direct Spending

Designating federal lands as wilderness could result in forgone offsetting receipts if, under current law, those lands would generate income from activities such as timber harvesting and mining. According to the Forest Service, those lands currently generate no significant receipts but do contain timber valued at \$6 million that may be harvested in the future. Such sales proceeds can be spent by the Forest Service without further appropriation. Thus, CBO estimates that any net budgetary impact from enacting this legislation would be negligible.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 886 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

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